



SYMMETRY'S NEWSLETTER FOR MANAGERS AND SUPERVISORS

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THE BALANCE SHEET

Health and wellness has traditionally been a concern for individuals and families. While employers began providing some health care as early as the 19th century, it is only in recent decades that organizations have begun to truly understand the far-reaching impact that employee physical and emotional health has on productivity and profits. Fortunately, the right Employee Assistance and Wellness Programs can significantly improve not only the health and well-being of your workforce — but of your bottom line, as well.

What Are Wellness Programs?

Wellness programs may include a variety of components — from web-based libraries featuring real contact with experts or specialists to company supported activities and prevention efforts. As incentive, some employers offer reductions in health insurance premiums to employees who participate in wellness initiatives. These often include positive lifestyle changes such as quitting smoking, losing weight, or complying with “heart healthy” or other disease management programs.

Disease management programs educate those individuals who are most at risk for chronic illness and involve them in an interactive process. Typically, employees complete a Health Risk Assessment to identify key risk factors for developing a medical condition, such as heart disease, stroke, or respiratory illness. Risk factors can include a family history of the disease, smoking, obesity, a high-fat diet, lack of exercise, and alcohol or drug abuse.

Understanding Emotional Wellness

Everyone understands the importance of caring for our physical health, but often we don't recognize how vital it is to also maintain a healthy emotional balance. True emotional wellness involves being connected to our emotions, being able to name and understand them, and knowing how to handle them — whatever they may be. An emotionally well person understands personal limitations, and knows how to seek support and assistance. He or she also knows how to deal with stress effectively, is able to say no without feeling guilty, enjoys relaxation without alcohol or other drugs, and is able to form satisfying relationships.

Our emotional health affects everything from how we view the world and the people we meet to how we function at home and work. By knowing how to meet our emotional needs constructively, we can maintain good mental health, a positive attitude, high self-esteem, and a strong self-image.

Walk This Way!

Did you know that people who walk regularly are better able to reduce their stress and improve their mood than people who don't? Walkers also reduce their risk of breast cancer, colon cancer, strokes, heart attacks, obesity, and diabetes. Why not get in step for better emotional health with a focused plan to start walking now?



www.symmetryeap.org

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Risk Factors Really Add Up

Consider these facts*:

- Chronic diseases account for more than 75 percent of our nation's \$2.3 trillion medical care costs.
- Seventy percent of all healthcare costs in the U.S. are attributable to preventable risks and unhealthy lifestyle choices such as smoking, poor eating habits and lack of physical activity.
- An estimated 66 percent of adults in this country are overweight or obese. These excess pounds cost U.S. companies an estimated \$13 billion per year.
- Alcohol and drug use cost U.S. employers \$128.6 billion in lost productivity and an additional \$15.8 billion in substance use-related employee health care costs. Alcoholism alone causes 500 million lost workdays annually.
- Up to 40 percent of industrial fatalities and 47 percent of all industrial injuries are attributed to alcohol use and alcoholism. And drug-using employees are 3.6 times more likely to be involved in a workplace accident and five times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim.
- Stress in the workplace costs U.S. corporations over \$300 billion annually.

Sources: Center for Disease Control, American Institute of Stress.

Ten Tips for Promoting Organizational Health

1. Encourage employee fitness through lunchtime walking, fitness memberships and incentive programs.
2. To help increase energy and focus, promote 'deskercises' to reduce strain from keyboarding, sitting and lack of fresh air.
3. Encourage higher water consumption and reduced caffeine. Water boosts immune systems and helps fight afternoon lulls.
4. Get people outside. Exposure to natural light regulates energy. Using "sunlight" lamps on a desktop for 30 minutes a day can be helpful in avoiding seasonal depression.
5. Promote a smoke-free environment and offer smoking cessation programs to help employees who wish to kick the habit.
6. Stress the importance of healthy snacks and lunches. That may require a review of what is offered in vending machines.
7. Promote team-building through meetings, projects, training and activities. Symmetry has positive, interactive trainings that promote individual and group wellness.
8. Encourage effective communication with openness and attentive listening. Learn to accept feedback.
9. Increase access to posters and brochures, develop a wellness center in a public area, and promote the use of Symmetry's Employee Assistance Program.
10. Wellness must be modeled by managers and supervisors. Call Symmetry to ask how we can help you.

Source: worksmartlivesmart.com/wellness

Symmetry Can Help

Symmetry understands the importance of wellness of the body and mind. Our staff believes each person has the power to change his or her physical and emotional health. Our EAP counselors can help in so many ways, including resolving conflict, improving daily functioning, and understanding relationships. Let us help put your employees on a path to total wellness. For more information or assistance, please contact Symmetry at (800) 236-7905 or (414) 256-4800.



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